

LOCAL Wicklow Times

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CHARLIE BIRD
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FILM INDUSTRY
Page 6



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Tuesday 4th October 2022 First Floor, The Boulevard, Quinsborough Road, Bray. A98 R6D7. Tel: 01 - 2869111 E-mail: wicklowed@localtimes.ie www.wicklowtimes.net

WAVE BYE BYE TO THE TRAIN?

According to a recent Irish Rail report the County Wicklow railway line may not be in existence by the end of the decade if remedial work does not happen.

An East Coast Railway infrastructure protection project scheme review was carried out by Irish Rail due to increasing damage to the line as a result of coastal erosion. It has estimated that it will require €230 million to keep the rail line through County Wicklow open and ensure its long-term existence.

Speaking in a recent Seanad debate, Fianna Fail Senator Pat Casey raised the issue of the enormous cost and

sought assurances that the investment will be made.

Transport Minister Eamon Ryan was not present for the debate, however reading a statement from him, Minister of State at the Department of Health, Mary Butler TD said the Government is taking the matter very seriously and that remedial action is underway.

"We need to know, to be able to give assurances to commuters, that the rail line will continue in the long

term and yet we have not heard from the Minister for Transport whether that level of investment will be made available. If we are to look at shifting significant numbers of people into using rail transport, particularly from counties Wexford and Wicklow, then we must ensure that we have a reliable rail service," said Wexford Senator Malcolm Byrne. "We already know that the Rosslare rail service is not a priority for Irish Rail or the Minister



Cllr Tom Fortune presents the Civic Award to members of Kilcoole Men's Shed at the Greystones People of the Year Awards which were held in Greystones Golf Club last Thursday. See more, pages 12 & 13. Photo by Michael Kelly

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because we are not getting the additional carriages that are being rolled out on the system. If we do not have the infrastructure, however, we will not have a train track on which even the old trains will be able to run."

Senator Casey stated "The Dublin-Rosslare east coast route has probably suffered from the least amount of investment over the 200 years of its history since it was delivered. It has great potential and provides an opportunity to take people off the road but we are not availing of it. The recently released report stated that we need an additional €230 million just to maintain the track that is in place before we try to deliver any additional services. In fairness, with regard to commuters from counties Wicklow and Wexford, once a person

leaves Greystones there is an almost non-existent service. I got into my car at Wicklow this morning at 7 a.m. and got to Leinster House at 9.15 a.m. There was only one train that left Wicklow during that period.

"Not alone are we talking about investment to try to maintain the rail route; we need significant and far-reaching investment to provide serious train potential for our commuters. If that is what we believe in, we need to invest in it.

"The current proposed draft policy with regard to the transport strategy for the greater Dublin area does not do justice to Wicklow once a person leaves Greystones. The line from Wicklow, Rathdrum, Arklow and then on to Wexford is not getting the level of investment that is

required. It needs to go further. We need to start talking about putting in

lay-bys and double tracks where trains can pass one another freely.

We are wasting our time investing €230 million **Continued on page 3**

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Ozzy and Teddy McCann with neighbour Petra Coffey at the Honey Festival in Ashford

‘We Can Quit’ stop smoking programme

Would you like to stop smoking? Or have you tried before and feel you could benefit from more support to help you quit?

Bray Area Partnership is running a free We Can Quit stop smoking programme, starting Wednesday 12th October in Purple House Cancer Support Centre in Bray.

The course will run one evening a week 7 - 8.30 pm for seven weeks and will offer group support, one-to-one support and free stop smoking medication.

The We Can Quit programme is part of the Slaintecare Healthy Communities initiative, which aims to provide support to people in local communities to make real and tangible changes in their lives to improve their health.

To find out more and register call Susanne at Bray Area Partnership on 01 286 8266 or 083 350 4218. See www.brayareapartnership.ie for more information.



Susanne Martin, We Can Quit Community Facilitator

Bray COPD support Group

A support group in Bray for people with COPD (Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) has resumed its meetings and are encouraging new members.

The group meets twice weekly at the Ballywaltrim Community Centre on the Boghall Road, Monday and Friday, from 12pm to 1pm. The group holds exercise classes and also organises social events. Those interested in learning more can contact John on 0861658283.

COPD is a disease that makes it hard to empty air out of your lungs because the airways get smaller, leading to airflow obstruction. This can result in shortness of breath or tiredness because the lungs have to work harder to breathe. COPD is a term used to include chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or a combination of both conditions.

Blessington golfers take home the cup

The All-Ireland winners of the NCBI Granard Cup were Aisling O'Connor & Julie Walshe from Blessington Lakes Golf Club.

The ladies head off to St Andrews on the 4th October. The Runners Up were Carrickmines Golf Club 41 with points and Balbriggan Golf Club also with 41 points.

NCBI stated, "Thank you to Athlone Golf Club for a wonderful day of golf, food and fun. A special shout out to the Lady Captain Frances McGettigan and Chairperson Gerry McInerney for welcoming all the golfers from around the country to their fabulous club."



Supper Concert Fundraiser for Sr Mary's work in Mukuru

Calary Church will once again host a Supper Concert in aid of the work done by Sister Mary Killeen in Mukuru, Nairobi. This has always been a fantastic night and raises very important funding for the street children in Mukuru. Wicklow group, Classic Harmony, an internationally award-winning and acclaimed vocal ensemble, who are all members of the one family, will perform on the night. The concert begins at 8 pm sharp after the supper, which is optional and starts at 6.30 pm.

Tickets for the concert, which starts at 8 pm, are €18 and €15 for concessions. The additional cost for the supper is €25 per person. Payment may be by cash, cheque or bank transfer.

For more information or to

book tickets, please ring John at (01) 2818146 or email derekneilson11@gmail.com.

National Women's Enterprise Day event

National Women's Enterprise day takes place on 13th October. LEO Wicklow will join with LEO Kildare for an in-person networking event in Keadeen Hotel, Newbridge, from 12pm to 4pm. Lunch included. To book, see localenterprise.ie.

Shankill Classical Music Club

The next meeting of the Shankill Classical Music Club will be on Wed 5th October. Usual time - 7:45 to 10:00 pm, and venue - Shankill Day Centre, Lower Rd, Shankill (100 yds from the main street, car parking available).

The music will be as always: a varied programme of classical music on CDs, covering many genres - orchestral, instrumental, vocal, opera etc. To get an idea of the range, have a look at some of the playlists on www.shankillclassical.org.

You don't need to be an expert! Visitors and new members are always welcome. There's no charge on the night.

For further info please phone or text John on 087-2109175.

The Old Dublin Society

Max Cannon will present his lecture 'Thomas Earley, manufacturer of ecclesiastical furniture and stained-glass windows, Upper Camden Street, Dublin' to The Old Dublin Society at 6 p.m. on Wednesday October 12th in the Conference Room of Dublin City Library & Archive. Admission is free and no-booking is required.



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WAVE BYE BYE TO THE TRAIN?

Continued from Page 1

unless we go that step further. The greater Dublin transport strategy does not go far enough in what it is proposing. We need significant investment if we are going to move people out of their cars and onto the train."

The Transport Minister's response stated that "In 2015, Iarnród Éireann, along with Wicklow County Council, co-funded significant erosion mitigation emergency works at The Murrough near Wicklow railway station. These works were prompted by an erosion event that almost resulted in the loss of a section of railway line. This joint collaboration was very successful and prompted the need to undertake a much larger multi-agency study of coastal erosion along this stretch of coastline."

"A steering group was established with representatives of Iarnród Éireann and Wicklow County Council in February 2018, which agreed to undertake a coastal erosion study in accordance with OPW study requirements. It was agreed that Iarnród Éireann would take the lead role for the tender process to procure a specialised consultant to undertake this study. Within the scope it was envisaged to generate a high-level coastal erosion model for the scope area and then assess the results. Each risk area would then be examined to establish the best solution to be installed, if any. On foot of the consultant's review, a significant body of work was expected on receipt of the final report."

"With the frequency and severity of impacts increasing, with climate change causing more impacts in the past 20 years than in the previous 100 years, Iarnród Éireann has proactively commenced a major climate resilience programme to ensure the long-term protection of major sections of the Dublin to Rosslare rail line from the effects of climate change."

"Following the climate resilience studies undertaken by Iarnród Éireann in 2018,

the east coast railway infrastructure protection projects, ECRIPP, was developed to ensure an effective preventive approach to the protection of the line. ECRIPP is funded by the National Transport Authority under the National Development Plan 2021-2030 and through a range of interventions along the route, with a particular focus on the area between Merrion Gates in Dublin and Wicklow town, it seeks to secure the future of the line for generations to come."

Minister Ryan has been advised by Iarnród Éireann that detailed design and planning works, including environmental assessments and statutory submissions will be delivered under the first phase of the programme, for which Jacobs Engineering has been contracted as multi-disciplinary consultants.

Options such as breakwaters, beach nourishment, onshore revetment strengthening and other interventions will be subject to detailed design in the first phase of the programme, which will also focus on planning and approvals.

Speaking about the 2015 storm event, Senator Casey said "We have known all along that the rail line on the east coast is vulnerable and we have done nothing about it. It took a storm event to get the issue resolved in 2015. Unless we deliver in this regard, realistically, we are wasting our time. We must protect the rail line and we must develop additional services on it. I thank the Minister of State for her time."

Deputy Butler said that Iarnród Éireann has been monitoring the Wicklow line and the effects of coastal erosion on it for many years.

It is planned that ECRIPP, will be delivered over the coming seven years under a series of work packages for each location, including Bray Head to Greystones north beach, Newcastle to Wicklow, Dalkey tunnel to Killiney station and Rosslare.



A wreath laying ceremony took place in Bray last week to mark the 15th anniversary of the deaths of firefighters Brian Murray and Mark O'Shaughnessy, who died in the line of duty at Adelaide Villas in Bray on 26th September 2007. Photo by Shane Phelan.

Extra funding to facilitate school transport places in Wicklow

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore has welcomed confirmation from the Government that additional funding has been approved for the school transport scheme.

The funding will allow officials, in consultation with Bus Éireann, to consider further places on the scheme. Since the announcement of the waiving of school transport fees this coming school year, there has been a series of backlogs due to increased demand as a result.

Deputy Whitmore said, "Many families were struggling to get their child a place on the school transport scheme and were still waiting for a decision after the new school year had already started. I had many distressed parents from across Wicklow get in touch with me unable to get any information and needing to plan ahead how they were going to get their children to school. This uncertainty was adding a lot of stress for families and communication was not forthcoming from Bus Éireann or the Department of Education to individuals."

"I contacted the Minister on a number of occasions in response to this issue. I am delighted now that resources have been granted to work through any backlog and to see if there is additional capacity to provide further school transport places and hope that the scheme can be expanded in Wicklow."

"While this is very welcome, it doesn't guarantee a school place for everyone who has applied, and it is restricted to those who sent their application form on time and who previously held concessionary tickets. There have also been constraints in trying to secure drivers and vehicles to expand the scheme across the country, Wicklow not an exception."

"I would urge any parents from Wicklow who applied and who have not yet been given a concessionary bus ticket, to contact Bus Éireann in light of this recent announcement."

Public warned not to disturb seals

Wicklow County Council is reminding beach users, and particularly dog owners, to avoid disturbing seals when they visit the coast at this time of year.

September to December is a particularly important time for grey seals as it is the breeding season during which time the adults seek safe sites to 'haul out' on land.

These are beaches where the animals return year after year to breed, rest, moult and engage in social activity. It is also the time when they give birth to a single pup which

is born with distinctive white fur and needs to stay on land for a number of weeks while it is being weaned by its mother.

In recent weeks there have been a number of sightings of seal pups all along the Wicklow coast and this is a time when they are particularly vulnerable to disturbance by humans and dogs. It is important to note that 'dis-

turbance' can easily occur when seals become aware of human presence even at a distance.

People and dogs are asked to maintain a minimum distance of 100m from seals that are on land as coming close to them will cause stress and can lead to the abandonment of pups by mothers.

Orphaned pups have very little chance for sur-

vival and often Seal Rescue Ireland (SRI) must intervene by bringing a seal into rehabilitation whereas without human disturbance the pup would have been successfully cared for and weaned in the wild.

If any member of the public comes across a seal it is very important to keep a distance, never touch and never attempt to return a young animal to the sea.

The Wicklow coast is a much-valued public amenity and the public can play a huge role in helping to conserve this protected species. Seals are legally protected under the Wildlife Act and it is illegal and dangerous to approach them or to allow dogs to do so.

The Municipal Districts of Wicklow and Greystones are working in tandem with Seal Rescue Ireland to raise public awareness of this issue by erecting information signs at known haul out sites and restricting access to these areas as required. For more information and to report sightings: www.sealrescueireland.org and Seal Rescue Hotline T: 087 1955393.



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Charlie Bird given Freedom of Wicklow

Journalist and broadcaster Charlie Bird was conferred with the Freedom of County Wicklow by Wicklow County Council last Monday, 26th September, in recognition of his work and outstanding achievements in the field of broadcasting and journalism and more recently in his campaigning and raising funds for the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association and Pieta House.

Charlie, who was conferred with the honour at a special ceremony in the Council Chamber, County Buildings, Wicklow, was only the third recipient of this unique honour: Oscar-winning actor and Wicklow resident, Daniel Day-Lewis, was the first in 2009 and World champion boxer, Katie Taylor,

was the second in 2011.

The conferring of the honorary freedom of the County Wicklow is bestowed by the County Council on a person who has distinguished themselves in such a manner as is deemed worthy to have their name entered onto the Roll of Persons So Honoured.

The Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr Tommy Annesley, said: "We would like to congratulate Charlie and commend him on all the tireless fundraising work he has carried out over the past year. It is clear the impact you have had on so many and it's fitting that we bestow this honour on you today."

our on you today."

Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council, Mr Brian Gleeson, stated: "We are all immensely proud of Charlie and it is a privilege to pay tribute to him. Charlie has brought honour to not only himself and his family but to the people of Wicklow."

In response, Charlie Bird said: "I am deeply honoured to receive the Freedom of Wicklow, following in the footsteps of Daniel Day Lewis and the great Katie Taylor. I am accepting this amazing award on behalf of everyone across Ireland and abroad who helped to make 'Climb with Charlie' the outstanding success it was. So thank you to the people of Wicklow for extending the hand of friendship."

The Commemoration Piece presented to Mr Bird was created by the west Wicklow based artist and blacksmith Michael Calnan of Calnan & Anhoj, forge and gallery, Russborough House, Blessington. The sculpture is symbolic of the journalist and broadcaster Charlie Bird's long and fruitful career in the world of media as well as his personal connection to County Wicklow. Handcrafted from forged bronze and mounted on a base of rough-hewn granite, the bronze quill references Charlie Bird's work as a highly respected news correspondent and documentarian.

The bronze eagle's talon symbolises the great physical and moral courage that he's shown throughout his life and career. Lastly, the bronze key represents the Freedom of the County of Wicklow as awarded to him today by Wicklow County Council in appreciative recognition of what has been an exceptional life and career that continue to serve as an inspiration to many.

A native of Sandymount, Co Dublin, Charlie now lives in Ashford, Co Wicklow, with his wife Claire and dog Tiger. A keen interest in politics and an appetite for curiosity, it was no surprise when Charlie forged a career in journalism. That career spanned nearly four decades which saw him working with RTE since the 1970s including taking on roles such as Chief News correspondent and later Washington Correspondent.

Amongst the many high profile stories Charlie covered were the



Charlie Bird receiving the Freedom of Wicklow from Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Brian Gleeson and Cathaoirleach Cllr Tommy Annesley

Stardust tragedy, the IRA ceasefire, the National Irish Bank scandal, the election of Mary Robinson as first female President and the Marriage Equality Referendum.

Aside from reporting the news, Charlie took on other projects that saw him travelling the world exploring some of the most remote and remarkable places on our planet. He brought

us documentary programmes from places such as the Amazon, the River Ganges and the Canadian Arctic.

Following early retirement from RTE in 2012, Charlie pursued new projects, including programmes such as 'After the Headlines', where he returned to major news stories from years past.

In 2015 Charlie was heavily involved in the

campaign for a Yes vote on Marriage Equality. Travelling the country in that role, he gathered stories which he documented in his book 'A Day in May', which later was turned into a stage production by Colin Murphy and directed by Gerry Stembridge in the Olympia Theatre, Dublin.

As well as having two daughters Orla and Neasa, Charlie is also a

proud grandfather to Charlie, Hugo, Harriet, Abigail and Edward.

In more recent years, Charlie was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease. He bravely turned this devastating news into tireless work on behalf of the Motor Neurone Disease Association and Pieta House raising nearly €3.4 million for both with his recent climb of Croagh Patrick in Mayo.



Broadcaster Charlie Bird



Charlie Bird with his wife Claire and faithful dog Tiger

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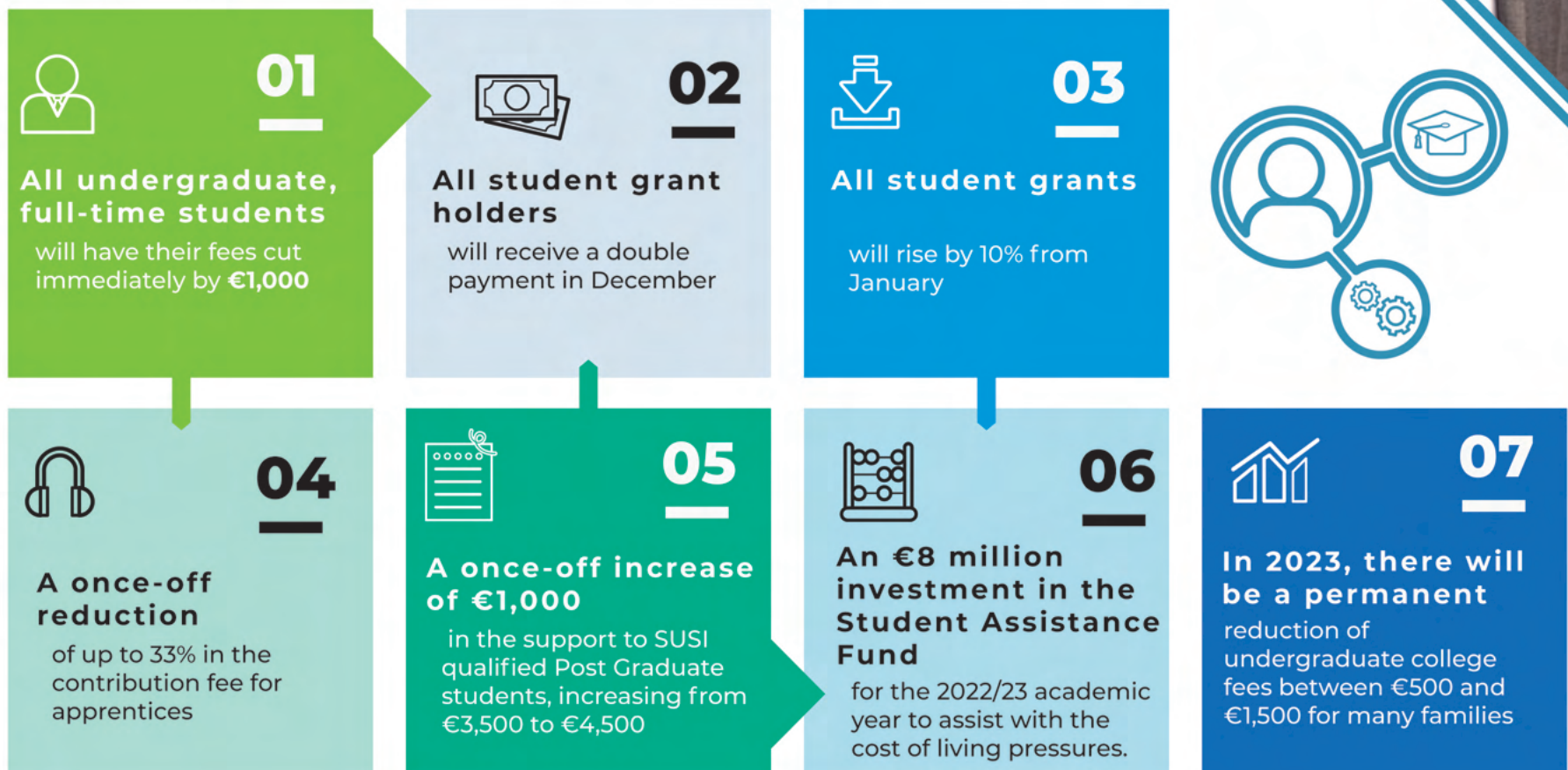
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Minister Simon HARRIS_{TD}



Dear Wicklow Resident,

Budget 2023 is a Cost of Living Budget, designed to help you and your family during this difficult time. I promised you I would work to cut the cost of education for hard-pressed families across County Wicklow and the country. I am really pleased that we secured important changes in Budget 2023 that will benefit so many people.



IN THIS BUDGET, FINE GAEL AND THE GOVERNMENT ARE:

- Helping you and your family with the cost of living in areas like childcare, public transport, the cost of putting a child through school, or saving up for your first home.
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- Ensuring the best start for every child with major investment in childcare and early education.

For more information on the above or on any issue in the budget please contact my office where I would be happy to try and assist.

Many thanks,
Simon

FINE GAEL

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simon.harris@oireachtas.ie



Cara Swanton at the Honey Festival in Ashford

‘Wicklow should be global hub of film, TV and animation production’

Brady calls for Government to take action

Sinn Fein TD John Brady met recently with Elaine Geraghty the Managing Director of Ardmore Studios in Bray and Troy Studios, the key investor in the planned €300 million Greystones Media Campus.

Their parent company Hackman Capital Partners are the world's leading real estate and studio services organisation. They operate the largest independent studio portfolio in the world, which includes 19 studio properties, over 35 media campuses, and over 550 sound stages.

Deputy Brady said: "It was absolutely fantastic to meet with Elaine Geraghty, the Managing Director of Ardmore Studios in Bray & Troy Studios. The commitment that Elaine and her colleagues have made to County Wicklow is evident in the scale of their investment in the County. From Ardmore in Bray, and the new €300 million Media Campus in Greystones, they are putting in place the infrastructure that has the potential to position our county at the centre of the film making industry.

"Elaine was able to give me a full update on the productions currently being shoot in Ardmore and to provide an update on the plans for new stages in Ardmore and the development of the Greystones Media Campus. The film industry provides huge employment in Wicklow and needs to be supported. To date the Government for reasons best known to themselves appear to have missed the boat when it comes to recognising the potential of the industry.

"In Ireland, and in particular here in Wicklow, we are blessed with the quality of our studios, the calibre of the production staff and creative talent, along with some of the best scenic locations that the industry could hope for.

"But if the industry is to reach its full potential the government needs to act to remove the obstacles that are currently causing the industry to lose out to overseas com-



John Brady TD with Elaine Geraghty, Managing Director of Ardmore and Troy Studios

petitors, where overseas Governments, recognising the potential of the film industry in social and economic terms are streets ahead of the coalition here in Ireland.

"Ireland, with Wicklow at the centre, has

the potential to be a global hub for the production of film, TV drama, and animation. But we need to see a government with the vision and leadership to work with the industry to achieve its full potential."

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Children

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Government of Ireland



Frank Kelly conducting the Bray Choral Society during Culture Night at the Holy Redeemer in Bray

Committee approves solar panel planning exemptions

Red tape to be removed for installation of solar panels for farms and schools in Wicklow

The Oireachtas Housing committee has approved recommendations for planning exemptions for solar panel installations which will allow the Minister to sign the exemptions into law early this week.

This will mean that Wicklow residents will no longer require planning permission to put solar panels across residential rooftops, farm buildings, schools, community centres and a range of commercial buildings.

Confirming the news, Green Party TD Steven Matthews said: "Despite several delays over the past year, I'm delighted to see these proposals confirmed by the committee today which will remove unnecessary cost and complexity that currently comes with installing solar panels on private and community buildings. Following referral to the Dail I expect the exemptions to be in place within a number of days. The demand

for homegrown, renewable energy has never been so high, given the context of today's fossil fuel crisis and soaring energy costs, so these exemptions cannot come into place soon enough. "Solar power makes sense, it works well in our Irish climate, it saves money, has a short payback time and it provides secure energy for homes and businesses."

The draft regulations underwent the Strategic Environmental Assessment process, and the environmental report and draft regulations were published for a 4-week public consultation.

Deputy Matthews continued: "Solar

power, in both individual rooftops and at utility scale, has huge potential in supplying our energy needs, offsetting costs and helping to achieve the targets in our Climate Action Plan. The Microgeneration Support Scheme which kicked in this summer, now also allows residents to get paid for excess energy they generate. This will create thousands of jobs, increase reliability and resilience in our energy supply and lead to a decarbonised future. These measures support key government policies on energy, our transition to Net Zero and will help us to achieve our EU renewable energy targets", concluded Deputy Matthews.

Boost for student grant holders

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris has announced third level students will receive an extra boost in their grant payments as part of measures agreed by Budget 2023.

Every SUSI maintenance grant recipient will receive an additional payment before Christmas and their grants will increase from January. These measures will significantly improve the amount of maintenance supports that a student receives.

For example, when you combine these measures a student on the non-adjacent special rate of grant will receive over €1,000 in this academic year.

Minister Harris said: "It is my job as Minister to ensure every person, regardless of their background, has the same opportunity to access further and higher education.

"The student maintenance

grant is a vital tool in helping us deliver fairness and equality for students across our education sector, but we know it can do more. That's why as part of Budget 2023 we are making significant changes which will see students have more money in their pockets to help them tackle the challenges posed by the cost of living crisis."

The student maintenance grant rates will increase effective from January 2023. This will mean that from January, the Special and Band 1 maintenance grant rates will increase by 14% and

all other maintenance grant rates will increase by 10%. Students in the current academic year will see their grant payments increase proportionately once this measure comes into effect in January.

As an immediate measure, funding of €17.4m has also been provided for a once-off extra payment equivalent to one month's maintenance for all student maintenance grant recipients to also be made by this December.

Minister Harris added: "Giving students and their families some peace of mind in these challenging times is at the heart of

everything we are trying to do with these Budget measures. That's why we have reduced the student contribution fee for this academic year by €1,000, and ensured that apprentices will also see their fees cut by a third.

"We are also conscious of the struggles PhD students are facing, so those in receipt of awards from the SFI or IRC will see their stipend increase by €500. And the Student Assistance Fund, which helps so many students who continue to struggle financially, will see an additional €8 million invested in it for the 2022/23 academic year."

Calls for Blessington community garden and allotment

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore TD met with Chairperson of Community Gardens Ireland, Blessington resident Donal McCormack at Leinster House last week to discuss the need for improved legislation to protect and promote community growing in Ireland.

Community Gardens Ireland recently published their report Lets Get Growing which highlighted the poor provision of community growing spaces in Ireland compared to other EU countries and the UK. The group is now calling for the Government to commit and support the doubling of the number of community growing spaces in Ireland by 2025.

Deputy Whitmore said, "It was great to meet Donal, Chairperson of Community Gardens Ireland and founder of Blessington Allotments. Donal and his team have done incredible work to get the movement off the ground in Wicklow and to advocate for better investment from government to make sure every community has access to growing spaces.

"The benefits of such spaces are far reaching from the improved wellbeing they can have on a person's mental health, to the positive impact that growing food locally can have on the environment and biodiversity. In Blessington you can see just how important even the limited space Blessington Allotments currently has, is for locals since Donal and his team set it up a number of years ago. I was also delighted to receive some fresh produce from the garden including a strawberry plant!

"Wicklow County Council is one of eight local authorities in Ireland that do not provide any allotments or community gardens. At a time when we are asking individuals and communities throughout Ireland to play a bigger role in climate action, we need to ensure that communities are supported from all levels to achieve this. The provision of spaces for communities and individuals to grow produce is a very basic and achievable way of encouraging local climate action.



Deputy Whitmore with Donal McCormack at Leinster House

"I fully support Community Gardens Ireland in the work they are doing to highlight the benefits of community growing spaces and the real need to increase the number of them being provided.



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St. Mary's College Arklow

St Mary's College, Arklow enjoys a proud tradition of educational excellence, providing a broad and balanced experience for young women of South Wicklow and North Wexford for over one hundred years.

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1881, St. Mary's is now a proud member of the CEIST educational trust and is committed to the holistic development of every student entrusted into its care.

Based just off the Main Street, on St Mary's Road, the school boasts a wonderful campus in a beautiful setting with a blend of traditional and contemporary buildings, with cutting edge ICT facilities and WiFi throughout. The building houses state-of-the-art facilities including 4 Science laboratories, 2 Art Rooms, 2 Home Economics kitchens, a Dress Design room, Computer Room, full size PE Hall, Canteen and a beautiful Concert Hall.

"The student is at the centre of everything we do and we offer a strong pastoral support system including liaison students, tutors and year heads," says Principal Aidan Ward.

This support system is complemented by a dedicated and experienced



Principal Aidan Ward with Deputy Principal Elaine Sweeney

guidance team, working under the Principal and Deputy Principal.

The AEN department provides support to students with additional educational needs ensuring that every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential and this year St. Mary's is delighted to

open its first dedicated ASD Special Class.

"Our academic curriculum caters for students of all abilities and we pride ourselves on ensuring that students achieve their potential and progress to the next stage of their lives whether at Third Level, through appren-

ticeships or in the world of work," says Mr Ward.

In Leaving Certificate 2022, St. Mary's students continued to perform ahead of national norms with 5 students (6.7%) achieving in excess of 600 points, with a further 12 (16%) scoring in the 500-point range. St Mary's girls can be found in the lecture theatres of all of our major universities studying a wide range of courses from medicine to engineering, psychology to primary teaching and everything in between.

This commitment to a holistic educational experience is evident in the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available to students.

The dedication of the staff ensures that St. Mary's offers competitive and participation opportunities in Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Camogie, Gaelic Football, Rugby and Soccer, while students interested in pursuing equestrian, golf and swimming are supported also.



Lunch time at St. Mary's College

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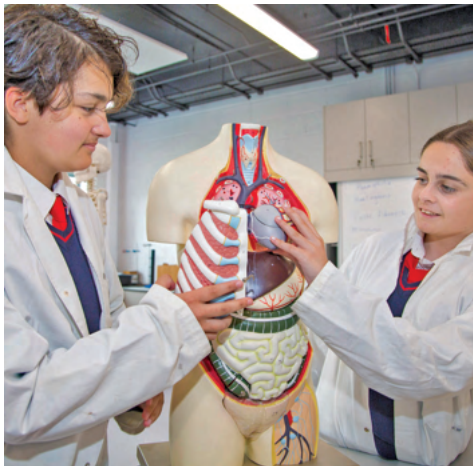


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St. Mary's students in the science lab

In recent years St. Mary's has achieved significant success in track and field including success in senior soccer at regional and provincial level, county titles in Camogie and GAA and a plethora of medals at recent interschools athletics meets.

St. Mary's College is also firmly committed to the arts, offering students wonderful opportunities to display their endless talent through choir, orchestra, drama and of course the school musical productions, most recently Legally Blonde, which rival any professional production.

Through a partnership with the Arts Council and the Creative Engagement Project, St. Mary's students have a chance to experience and demonstrate their creativity and a wide range of student artwork is on display around the campus.

At a co-curricular

level, students have the opportunity to excel in events such as BT Young Scientist, SciFest, Junk Kouture, Model United Nations, as well as debating in English (Concern) and Irish (Gael Linn) and students have enjoyed many successes in these competitions in recent years.

"Education does not finish at the school door and this year we are delighted to reintroduce foreign travel to our offering with a senior cycle Art and Culture trip to Paris in April 2023 followed by a Junior Cycle Cultural visit to Rome in May 2023," says Mr Ward.

"The return of our Open Day for the first time since 2019 is a welcome opportunity to showcase all that is good about our school. We invite all prospective students and their parents to join us on Tuesday 18th October from 3.30 - 6.30 pm."



Nature Studies at St. Mary's College



Mural at St. Mary's College



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Quinn Barnwall Buggy Architects would like to wish St Marys College Arklow the very best with their new extension to the Maris Stella block, which adds another two state-of-the-art Science Labs & Prep Rooms to the school's armoury of already impressive facilities. As specialists in designing education facilities, and in working with schools, we are proud to have been involved in what is a great addition to a school on an upward trajectory.

The new two-storey extension has been designed not only to provide the new labs but also to enhance the whole building with a new double-height top-lit foyer, providing an entrance point to a place of learning that we hope will benefit the students & staff alike. Let the magic begin.

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2022 Greystones Municipal District People of the Year Awards

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The 30th Greystones People of the Year awards, sponsored by Wicklow Times, were held last Thursday evening in the beautiful surrounds of Greystones Golf Club. It was the return of the awards after a two-year interlude due to the pandemic. Unsung heroes from around the Greystones district were celebrated in an evening that was devoted to those who give their time and skills to making their community a better place to live.



Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Cllr Gerry Walsh, Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council Brian Gleeson, Tawnia Kearns from Greystones Municipal District Office, Ian Colgan from Wicklow Times, and Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council Cllr Tommy Annesley at the Greystones People of the Year Awards in Greystones Golf Club.

Attending the awards, Jennifer Whitmore TD met with the recipients and their families saying, "it was a wonderful evening for all attending especially after not having the opportunity to celebrate our local champions during Covid. What's really striking is just how much talent and community spirit we have in Greystones whether it's sports, entrepreneurship, or social enterprise, so many people are doing incredible things in the local area."

"I had the opportunity to meet with the award winners and their proud families including Gavin Murphy of Rise at The Cover and Phil Thompson of Carraig Eden who have added so much value to our community through their multiple projects."

"It is so important to celebrate and recognise the people making a difference and working to make our communities a much better place. A huge thank you to the Wicklow Times, their staff and Wicklow Co Co for organising the evening, Greystones Gold Club for hosting and a big congratulations to all the Award winners."

CIVIC AWARD - KILCOOLE MEN'S SHED

Kilcoole Men's Shed was one of the recipients of the joint Civic Award this year. We all know the important role Mens Sheds play. They're grassroots community groups, important outlets for Men where they can come together to learn from each other, share skills, collaborate on projects and form long-lasting friendships in the process. They also contribute a lot to the local community, and Kilcoole Mens' Shed is a shining example of that, and especially so over the last 12 months.

When Russia invaded Ukraine, Kilcoole Men's Shed wasted no time in collecting supplies, raising funds, working with the local community and supervising collections, so that four articulated lorry loads of essential supplies could be shipped overseas.

With a balance of 3,500 euro left in the account, they decided to give this money to Tiglin in Greystones.

They helped to make Kilcoole village a nicer place to live in the past year, by erecting new fencing, making two new public seats, and tidying and painting at the graveyard in Priestnewtown. They worked with pupils from Kilcoole Primary School to turn old pallets into beautiful planters, and worked with the community association to erect two flagpoles, one flying the Irish flag and the other the Ukrainian flag.

Since they were formed in February 2020, the Shed has been involved in a diverse mix of projects in Kilcoole such as the restoration of furniture and maintaining the Playground on the Sea Road.

Given the on/off Covid restrictions which seriously affected their activities, the Shed can be justly proud of their achievements to date.

SPORTS AWARD - KACI ROCK

Co. Wicklow has no shortage of boxing talent, but arguably the best new rising star is from Greystones. Kaci Rock is a worthy winner of this year's Sports Award for her incredible achievements.

Kaci started boxing when she was six years old, and trains in Enniskerry Boxing Club. Now, at 19 years old, Kaci has already represented Ireland at European level and also World level, and currently holds the No.1 spot in Ireland in the 66kg weight class.

In October of last year, Kaci was the youngest boxer to win the National Elite Championships, and did so by a Technical Knock Out in Round 3 of the final bout.

In February of this year, Kaci won the National U22 Championships after three fights - her 5th National Title. Following this success, she was cho-



Kaci Rock

sen to represent Ireland at the U22 European Championships and brought home a Bronze Medal.

Kaci was chosen to represent Ireland at the Elite Women's World Championships in Turkey alongside some of the biggest names in women's boxing, and as

the youngest boxer in the tournament she made it to the Last 16 in the world.

This month, Kaci will represent Ireland again in the Elite European Championships and aims to top the podium. After that, a spot in the 2024 Olympics in Paris doesn't seem out of her reach.



Cllr Jodie Neary presenting the Sports Award to Kaci Rock's parents, Jim and Hedy Rock, who accepted it on behalf of Kaci, who was unable to attend



Cllr Lourda Scott presenting the Civic Award to Margaret O'Callaghan of Greystones Tidy Towns, who accepted the award on behalf of Marie McCooley who was unable to attend

CIVIC AWARD - MARIE McCOOEY

Marie McCooley was the other winner of the Joint Civic Award. Marie is stepping down as Chair of Greystones Tidy Towns after nearly seven years in the role. During her time leading the organisation, it has received three medals in the annual Tidy Towns competition - a bronze in 2018 and two silvers, in 2019 and 2021. The group also played a role in Greystones twice being voted as one of the World's Most Livable Communities.

Marie has been active with Greystones Tidy Towns for 20 years and took over as chair in 2016. Known for her considerable energy and enthusiasm in making Greystones' public spaces more beautiful, Marie showed a flair for recruiting volunteers and building good relations with resident groups, local businesses and Municipal District officials.

During her time leading Greystones Tidy Towns, the group has taken on several major projects. They include the design, planting and maintenance of a special sensory garden in Burnaby Park which was opened earlier this year. Tidy Towns also restored and replanted the park's long flowerbed beside Mill Road, and the bed along the side of the Bowling Club.

Marie has sought to increase awareness of the need to protect and enhance biodiversity with insect-friendly planting, and has worked to increase nature awareness, especially with young people through schools' outreach.

SPECIAL AWARD - JAKE MITCHELL

Sixteen-year old Temple Carrig student Jake Mitchell is the winner of this year's Special Award for the hard work over the last two years in his campaign to get a skatepark for Kilcoole.

Jake has demonstrated a great commitment to improving his community, and improving the lives of other young people in the community, and has demonstrated tenacity and focus in his endeavour. He put a plan together, convinced others to support him, and created a video to promote it. He did all this during Covid.

Jake has demonstrated tremendous strength throughout his life, and is a great role model for his peers. His enthusiasm for the project and his positivity have been infectious and has led Minister Simon Harris and Cllr Tom Fortune to support him in his efforts, as well as his school principal Alan Cox.

Jake was inspired to campaign for the skate park as he was tired of having nowhere locally that he could ride his scooter. He was proactive and decided to try and do something about it. Temple Carrig started an initiative during the pandemic - a 'Do Something Great' award, to help motivate students during lockdown. This was all the impetus Jake needed and it's safe to say he has done something great. A recent milestone in the campaign was achieved when Wicklow County Council applied for funding which will hopefully be delivered to help make the project a reality.



Jake Mitchell, with Harry and Sarah Mitchell, collecting the Special Award from Cllr Derek Mitchell

2022 Greystones Municipal District People of the Year Awards

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SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD - PHIL THOMPSON, GAVIN MURPHY & TIGLIN

The Special Recognition Award this year recognised the work of Wicklow-based charity Tiglin, which helps people overcome addiction and homelessness, and has improved the lives of hundreds of people and their families.

In particular the award recognises Tiglin's co-founder and CEO Phil Thompson, and Gavin Murphy who runs the Rise at The Cove Café, Tiglin's social enterprise Café on the grounds of Carrig Eden.

A Greystones resident for the last 10 years, Phil co-founded Tiglin in 2008, and opened its first facility in Ashford. Since then several other centres have been opened, including two in Greystones - the Carrig Eden Aftercare



Phil Thompson with Minister Stephen Donnelly, Aubrey McCarthy, and Michael Nicholson

Facility and Coolnagreina. Phil worked around the clock to set up Tiglin's operation at Coolnagreina when Tiglin took it over last December.

Phil has overseen and spearheaded many vital projects which have helped people recover from addiction, get back on their feet and find new purpose in their life again.

When Ukrainian refugees began to arrive in Greystones, Phil opened the doors of Coolnagreina

to them. He was there to welcome them when they arrived at 1am, and was there to make breakfast for them at 7am, and even gave up his own office, turning it into a bedroom for a Ukrainian man and his son who needed it.

Tiglin has since helped the Ukrainians integrate into the local community, through events such as the Ukrainian-Irish Friendship Night' at Whale Theatre. Tiglin has also helped them find employment, and

facilitated meetings between the Ukrainians and local Ministers Simon Harris and Stephen Donnelly, who were able to help the Ukrainians in the areas of Education and Childcare.

In late 2021 Phil helped to establish the Rise at The Cove Café, converting a tool shed into a gourmet coffee shop, an enterprise which serves the community and helps the residents of Carrig Eden at the same time - giving them employment after they graduate from the rehabilitation programme.

Running that Café is Gavin Murphy, and under his management it's been a massive hit. It's now at the heart of the community. Gavin has helped to bring together the residents of Carrig Eden and the Greystones swimming community, and the Greystones community at large.



District Manager Michael Nicholson presents the Special Recognition Award to Phil Thompson and Gavin Murphy

The Café has become a community hub, and has made Greystones a better place to live by fostering a welcoming and supportive community spirit. Gavin has trained, guided and nurtured the employees, and makes sure they leave the centre feeling proud about their CV, and he does it all with a smile.

Speaking about receiving the award, Phil Thomson said: "This

award honours those who are often left out and left behind or displaced. These people have been welcomed into the town and community of Greystones."

Rise at the Cove is a place to bridge the gaps that can be apparent when people are displaced and lose their place in society because of homelessness, war or substances.

A former Tea rooms at the previous holiday

accommodation unit Carrig Eden has now become a community hub, a place of welcome and inclusion.

Gavin Murphy said, "When Phil asked me if I would be interested in creating a cafe and community space at Carrig Eden, I knew that it could be a success, it has been a training ground and a place that Greystones has adopted as their own."



Gavin Murphy and Phil Thompson with Minister Simon Harris

COMMERCIAL AWARD - ANDREW HOLMES

Andrew Holmes of Andrew Holmes catering is the winner of this year's Commercial Award.

A graduate of the renowned College of Catering, Andrew's passion for creative cooking led him to stints in the famed Michelin starred restaurant L'Ecrivain and Avoca Restaurant (where he was Head Chef for five years), as well as some time working abroad in France, before he returned to start up his own portable, flexible, high-quality catering service The Hogfather.

Based in Kilcoole, The Hogfather represents the highest standards in good grub combining the best fresh, local produce with a unique cooking style and presentation. This won him the award for Irish Wedding Caterer of the Year for three consecutive years, in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The success led Andrew to branch off into fine dining and establish Andrew Holmes Catering, and with these two enterprises there's really no event that Andrew can't cater for.

Many businesses had to evolve and adapt during Covid, which devastated the hospitality sector. The pandemic happened soon after Andrew opened his new delicatessen, Kitchen 28 in Kilcoole, but he showed great resilience and pivoted to start providing a top-class meal delivery service.

For these reasons, Andrew has proven himself a great businessman as well as being the Don of Catering, and fully deserves the Commercial Award.



Andrew Holmes being presented with the Commercial Award by Ian Colgan of Wicklow Times

YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR - JACK COMMONS



Young Entrepreneur winner Jack Commons, with Zoe O'Shaughnessey, collecting the award from Cathaoirleach of Greystones Municipal District Cllr Gerry Walsh

Young maths teacher Jack Commons is the winner of this year's Young Entrepreneur Award. Jack has contributed much to the local community, as a brilliant maths teacher, and also for his involvement in local sports, but it's for his entrepreneurship that he's being recognised this year.

Jack is responsible for setting up the online maths grinds company examsolutions.ie which contains helpful video tutorials for Leaving Cert students.

Jack, who grew up in and lives in Delgany, set up the website, and for a short time was charging people to access the videos. Then last year he made the decision to give students free access to it, ensuring that every student in Greystones who may not otherwise have the means to get maths grinds, was still able to get the extra help they need through the solutions videos.

Jack set up examsolutions.ie during the Covid pandemic, allowing students to access vital maths resources from their homes at a time when they badly needed such a resource, with face to face grinds and in-person maths classes not possible due to Covid restrictions.

He continued to teach during the day, and in the evenings spent multiple hours working on the website. By the end of the summer it contained over 50 hours of videos with solutions to every single Higher Level Maths past paper for the last 10 years for both the Junior and Leaving Cert.

CULTURAL AWARD - FRANCES BROWNER

Frances Browner is the winner of the Cultural Award. With her community poetry initiatives, Frances has undoubtedly enhanced the cultural landscape of Greystones, and has enriched the lives of individuals young and old through her writings and her various literary projects.

The famous Poetry Wall, in collaboration with Whale Theatre, is a fine example of the type of initiative Frances has spearheaded over the last few years, through her energy and commitment and her infectious love for literature and poetic expression which has inspired people to tap into their creativity.

Located in Theatre Lane, the Poetry Wall has become an annual initiative that many look forward to, where people of all ages can submit their poems and have them proudly displayed.

Frances is an established poet, writer, and creative writing tutor, and settled in Greystones in 2006 after 18 years of living in New York.

She compiled 'Greystones You Are...', an anthology of over 50 poems about Greystones, composed by local people of all ages, which was published last December with proceeds going to Greystones Cancer Support.

As well as that, Frances has been the curator of the Poets Corner at Greystones Railway Station; Has been the facilitator of the Scriobh Aris writing group with Greystones Cancer Support since 2016; Hosts the monthly Poets Parlour, the monthly open mic poetry session in Mrs Robinsons; Organised Poems in the Stones, an evening of poetry and song in Whale Theatre; and organised events for Poetry Day Ireland, such as the Poetry Trail.



Cllr Stephen Stokes presenting the Cultural Award to Frances Browner



Primary schools asked to 'Root for Nature' and plant a tree

The Tree Council of Ireland is encouraging primary school children across the country to take the pledge and plant a tree on National Tree Day, Thursday, 6th October.

This year's campaign theme 'Root for Nature' encourages children, parents and teachers to connect directly with nature by planting one of the 2,000 FREE Native Irish Holly tree saplings available on www.treeday.ie.

"This year's 'Root for Nature' theme calls on children to get involved in helping the environment while also teaching them about the complex root system under the tree," commented Eanna Ní Lamhna, President of the Tree Council of Ireland. "Intertwined with the roots of the tree is a fascinating microscopic network of fungus known as 'The Woodwide Web' that allows trees to communicate and connect to other trees, plants and animals."

As part of this year's campaign, sponsors SPAR and the Tree Council have teamed up with award-winning children's illustrator Fatti Burke to create the National Tree Day Colouring Competition. Children can pick up the colouring sheets in SPAR stores nationwide from September. Colouring resources for schools are also available on www.treeday.ie.

To claim a FREE Native Irish Holly tree and to find out more about this year's National Tree Day and the Colouring Competition visit www.treeday.ie.

Schools challenged to become battery recycling champions

The WEEE Ireland Schools Battery Recycling Competition returns this year, offering schools the chance to win one of six €2,000 sports equipment vouchers.

Running from October 1st to March 31st, it is open to all primary and secondary schools which collect at least 10 full 5kg battery boxes in WEEE Ireland Battery Recycling counties. Across all of Wicklow, people recycled the equivalent of 17 AA batteries per person in 2021, above the national average of 15.

The long running competition has a following of over 2,000 schools nationwide and encourages the involvement of teachers, families and wider communities to help students collect as many end-of-life batteries as possible.

When the competition last ran, schools across the country collectively diverted from landfill the equivalent of almost 1 million AA batteries.

"Many still don't realise that binning batteries leads to a loss of really valuable resources that are increasingly in short supply as well as causing harm to the environment," said Leo Donovan, CEO of WEEE Ireland.

"We are delighted to be able to return with this really important programme and expect a great response from students, teachers and the wider community, while encouraging some healthy competition."

Interested schools can visit weeireland.ie for more information on the competition and to order WEEE Ireland Blue Battery boxes.



TV host Mairead Ronan is challenging schools and students across Ireland to become battery recycling champions as part of a nationwide initiative, which will also help raise funds for children's hospice, LauraLynn. Mairead is joined by schoolgirls Cara and Elsie Jones, whose sister Molly avails of LauraLynn's services. Photo by Conor McCabe Photography.

Volunteers needed for English classes

Faite Isteach is a Conversational English Language Project co-ordinated by County Wicklow Partnership through the SICAP Programme. The project is aimed at providing free Conversational English classes for migrants in an informal setting.

They are looking for volunteers for the classes in Arklow Town, Wicklow Town and Baltinglass.

No experience or qualifications are necessary as a friendly welcoming attitude is most important.

You will be provided with materials and ongoing support from the facilitator. A commitment of two hours per week would

be required.

Arklow Town

Bridgewater Centre, 1st Floor Avoca River House (opposite Aldi)

Classes are held every Wednesday and Thursday morning from 10am - 12pm

Except during school holidays.

Wicklow Town

De la Salle Pastoral Centre, (Church

Grounds), St. Patrick's Road, Wicklow

Classes are held every Tuesday morning from 09.45am - 11.45pm

Except during school holidays.

Baltinglass

St Joseph's Parish Centre, Baltinglass

Classes are held every Thursday morning from 11am - 1pm

Except during school holidays

If you wish to find out more about volunteering for any of the above areas please contact Ann Byrne, County Wicklow Partnership on 085 8006873 or Contact the Office 0402 20955.

Carnew National School hosts children's fitness initiative

Carnew National School was amongst the first to host the popular children's fitness initiative 'Fit Squad' as it resumed its programme of in-person school visits following a two-year break during Covid.

Delivered by Irish fitness expert Tom Dalton and supported by Fyffes, the visits saw some 100 pupils participate in the active workout which included advice on healthy eating, demonstrations of exercises young

people should do and tips on how to use leisure time to stay physically fit.

Continuing until next March, it is expected that some 7,500 pupils nationwide will participate in the interactive fitness sessions, adding

to the over-20,000 pupils who have taken part in it since it was first launched in 2018.

Schools interested in receiving a similar visit can find details online at www.fyffesfit-squad.ie



Carnew National School pupils at the 'Fit Squad' event in their school

Commemorating the children of the Holocaust

Holocaust Education Ireland, a not-for-profit organisation aiming to inform and educate about the Holocaust and its consequences, is urging schools in Wicklow to become involved in The Crocus Project.

Holocaust Education Ireland provides schools in Wicklow with yellow crocus bulbs for pupils aged ten years and over to plant in memory of all the children who perished in the Holocaust. The aim of the project is to educate young people about the dangers of racism, and all forms of discrimination and hatred.

Speaking about the project, Lynn Jackson, Director of Education, said: "We are calling on schools, youth groups and community organisations in Wicklow to join us in planting yellow crocus bulbs to commemorate all of the children who perished in the Holocaust.

"The yellow flowers, recalling the yellow Stars of David, will bloom around the time of International Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January, presenting an opportunity for teachers and educators to introduce young people to the subject of the Holocaust, and teach the importance of inclusion and respect for all people regardless of their ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.

"Seeing the flowers bloom in the early new year ensures that the stories of the children who perished in the Holocaust are not forgotten but are passed on to future generations, while educating our young people in a tangible way about the perils of prejudice. The beautiful flowers also remind us that, even after the most terrible events, new life begins again and we can hope that things will be better than they were before. Last year, 12 schools in Wicklow participated in the project, and we would love to have more involved this year. We are urging teachers, parents and anyone involved in youth organisations or community groups in Wicklow, to get in touch with us to see how they can get involved."

There is no charge for participating in the Crocus Project. Holocaust Education Ireland provides teachers and educators with crocus bulbs and a Teacher's Handbook as well as guidance about the project that includes information and age appropriate material. The handbook is available in English and as Gaeilge as well as well as twelve European languages to ensure that children in Ireland and across Europe can fully participate in the project.

The Crocus Project is co-funded by the European Union and supported by the Department of Education. Further information on the project is available at www.holocausteducationireland.org/crocus-project

Cancer survivor wins Ecotrail 80k race in record time

The EcoTrail Wicklow race welcomed 1,200 trail runners from 42 countries in Bray on Saturday 24th September. EcoTrail is a network of international trail running races with events in location such as Paris, Stockholm, Porto, Valencia, Malaysia, or Thailand.



Arklow man Eugene Doherty makes his way over Bray Head during EcoTrail 2022

With start and finish from Bray Seafront, EcoTrail Wicklow offered participants a choice of four different races of 19km, 30km, 46km and 80km in distances.

Around 1,200 participants came from 42 different countries to enjoy the stunning weather and breath-taking landscapes of the Wicklow Mountains overlooking the Irish Sea.

This year's 80k winner Luke Grenfell-Shaw stole the show completing the gruelling 80km race in a record time of 6h 49minutes, 23 seconds, almost 50 minutes ahead of second place. During the after-race interview, Luke shared his amazing story of surviving stage four cancer and showing how his battle against the disease is not slowing him down.

Mr Brian Gleeson, Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council, said: "The EcoTrail Wicklow weekend has proven extremely successful with very positive feedback from all involved. With the extra support from Failte Ireland, EcoTrail Wicklow is



Luke Grenfell-Shaw, winner of the men's 80km race, with Fred Verdier of Wicklow Tourism and Trillium Chang from Canada, 3rd place in the women's 80km race

showing to the world what an amazing outdoor destination this county is."

Cllr Tommy Annesley, Cathaoirleach, Wicklow County Council, added: "Wicklow County Council is delighted to be involved with EcoTrail Wicklow. The event has proven a strong investment for the County offering so many opportunities to showcase our destination, and the variety of landscape and sceneries."

Mr Fred Verdier from Wicklow County Tourism stated: "EcoTrail is an amazing brochure for Wicklow, and thanks to the stunning weather on Saturday, we have now some fabulous photos and videos of the event and the destination. Over the next weeks and months, we will work hard to make sure those images and videos travel as far and wide around the world."

Ms Nicola Cleary,

EcoTrail Wicklow Event Coordinator, said: "We need to thank all of EcoTrail Wicklow partners and sponsors from their support, with a special mention to Wicklow County Council for their continued support, and to Failte Ireland for the extra resources this year. The team here is already busy debriefing this year's event, and planning for a bigger and better 2023 EcoTrail Wicklow Trail Running Festival."

Results

80km Male Winners

1. Luke Grenfell-Shaw, Great Britain, in 6h49min
2. Ricki Wynne, Leitrim in 7h37min
3. David Barry, Ireland in 7h50min

80km Female Winners

1. Lianne Van Dijk, Holland, in 7h51min
2. Aoife O'Brien, Wicklow, in 8h44min
3. Trillium Chang, Canada, in 8h58min

45km Male Winners

1. Enda Cloake, Wexford, in 3h45min
2. Paddy Hamilton, Ireland, in 3h50min
3. Rory Burke, Dublin, in 3h55min

45km Female Winners

1. Kath Carty, Australia, in 4h24min
2. Elizabeth Wheeler, Dublin, in 4h30min
3. Deirdre McCann, Monaghan, in 5h23min

30km Male Winners

1. Tudor Moldovan, Romania, in 2h25min
2. Alessandro Favero, Italy, in 2h25min
3. Peter Roche, Ireland, in 2h36min

30km Female Winners

1. Eimear O'Brien, Ireland, in 3h01min
2. Helen Corbett, Galway, in 3h08min
3. Orsolya Csikesz, Hungary, in 3h21min

19km Male Winners

1. Derek Crammond, Wicklow, in 1h23min
2. Niall Davis, Wicklow, in 1h29min
3. Turlough Conway, Dublin, in 1h35min

19km Female Winners

1. Michelle Bohan, Westmeath, in 1h46min
2. Lucy O'Malley, Wicklow, in 1h47min
3. Jenny Algar, Westmeath, in 1h47min

Fundraising campaign for Ukrainians at Polish border raises €7,000

A GoFundMe campaign has been set up by Wickow man Nick Reid, who recently competed in the Gaelforce 3.9km ironman swim in Killary fjord, Connemara. He has set up this fundraiser to raise money to support the people of Ukraine.

Nick uses the GoFundMe page to write, "For some time, I have felt guilty that I have not done enough to help support the poor people of Ukraine, to recognise the suffering they constantly endure, day in and day out, against the evil Russian regime and Putin's long drawn out especial military operation."

"Now is my time to do my bit. They are proud people and have every right to be a proud nation. I want to support them."

Monies raised by Nick will go towards supporting Colette Talbot's efforts to help the Ukrainian people.

Nick continues, "With all the monies raised with your sup-

port, these will go towards purchasing supplies in Poland (more cost-effective), whilst also purchasing specific items which are then taken by van across Europe to Poland, such as medical supplies and other vital items." Colette and her team then give oversight to the distribution on the ground and liaise with her Polish contacts, who then take the supplies across the border into Ukraine.

To donate see the GoFundMe Page at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/hswsar-people-of-ukraine>.

At the time of going to press almost €7,000 had been raised.



Calvin Doyle is boxing for Ireland in the European Championships taking place in Monteseviano in Italy this week. From Hollywood in west Wicklow, Calvin is trained by his father Alan Doyle and fights out of Olympic Boxing Club in Mullingar. He is two-time All Ireland Champion and Irish Cadet Champion, and having just turned 15 is also the youngest member on the Irish team.

Emma Langford - The Birdsong Tour

Whale Theatre, Saturday 15th October, 8pm (doors 7pm).

Emma Langford calls Limerick City in the West of Ireland home. Storytelling sits at the heart of everything this songwriter does; interweaving her live performances, and shining through her works. Hers is an inimitable, dreamy voice at the frontline of a new wave of Irish folk.

Langford was awarded the RTEFolk Award for Best Emerging Artist in 2018, and in following years was twice nominated for Best Folk Singer. She received the Music Network RESONATE residency, and Arts Council Agility Award in 2021 to support a continuing musical exploration of women in Irish history. Since 2017 Emma has written and independently released two highly acclaimed albums, Quiet Giant & Sowing Acorns, laying the groundwork for a bright, busy future.

As part of an international tour, in

2019 Langford made her US debut at the world's largest celebration of Irish music, Milwaukee Irish Fest - she makes her return to the US this August. Emma made the bold choice to release her new album, Sowing Acorns at the height of a global pandemic - the gamble paid dividends, and her sophomore record received huge international praise. The artist climbed the charts with her epic folk ballad Birdsong; collaborated with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra; was selected to perform at the prestigious Ireland Music Week international

showcase and on RTE's Ireland In Music which has been broadcast across the world to a huge global audience; and joined the wildly successful supergroup Irish Women In Harmony. In 2022 she is back on the road sharing work from her eclectic catalogue, and continuing her Arts Council supported research around Irish women in myth and history.

Approx Duration: 2 hours (including interval). Tickets €25 www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 to book.



Emma Langford brings the Birdsong Tour to Greystones, with support from Gemma Cox, Alec Brown, Clare Martyn and Hannah Nic Gearalt.

Lost Lear presented by Dan Colley, Riverbank Arts Centre and Mermaid

Mermaid Arts Centre, 13th - 15th October, 8pm, €18 | €16, 14 years +, Duration: 80 minutes

Following the national and international tour of A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings, Dan Colley and his company have turned their sights on a very (very) loose adaptation of King Lear, examining the self and that part of us that is inaccessible to others. The show will preview in Riverbank Arts Centre before it's official opening in Dublin Theatre Festival, with additional dates at Mermaid Arts Centre post-festival.

Fast-paced and thought-provoking, Lost Lear lands us into the world of Joy (Venetia Bowe), a woman with dementia, who is being cared for through a method where people live inside an old memory.

Co-produced by Mermaid Arts Centre and Riverbank Arts Centre and funded by the Arts Council of Ireland and supported by Fishamble's New Play Clinic.

'Lost Lear' is about two people trying to connect over a gradually widening chasm that dementia opens up. It uses

innovative theatre technology to distort our perceptions of reality and explore 'King Lear's' themes of reconciliation and the mercurial nature of the truth.

This adaptation focuses on the heartbreaking family drama of 'Lear' that has a lot to offer our dislocated times in which sometimes the people closest to us, seem to live in completely different realities. It is essentially a play about two people who are trying, and mostly failing, to talk to each other.

Director: Dan Colley. Written by Dan Colley, with the company, after Shakespeare

Greystones Film Club presents: Everything Everywhere All at Once

Whale Theatre, Thursday 13th October, 8pm (doors 7pm).

Just as back in 1999, The Matrix was everything Star Wars fans wished The Phantom Menace might have been, the latest Michelle Yeoh outing is everything Neo fans wished The Matrix Resurrections had been.

Just as back in 1999, The Matrix was everything Star Wars fans wished The Phantom Menace might have

been, the latest Michelle Yeoh outing is everything Neo fans wished The Matrix Resurrections had been.

The martial arts sci-fi actioner Everything Everywhere All At Once lives up to its absurd title, proving to be just

about the most head-spinning, spine-snapping, ribtickling movie you're going to see all year.



Or any other year, for that matter.

This is Charlie Kaufman meets Charlie Chan, Kung Fu Hustle via David Lynch, and it might just blow your mind. If you're able to keep up.

In a role originally slotted for Jackie Chan, the great Michelle Yeoh must be Oscar-bound for her portrayal of sad sack laundromat owner Evelyn, too busy worrying about finally getting her tax returns to their dreaded IRS auditor (a comically frumpy Jamie Lee Curtis) to notice that her wimpy husband has been trying to serve her divorce papers all morning. Throw in an angry teenage daughter who's trying to introduce her girlfriend to her grumpy, old-fashioned grandfather, and clearly, Evelyn could do with an escape plan.

Approx Duration: (USA/18/139mins).

Tickets €10 www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 to book.

Annual LYNX presents

f Giz a Laugh's

Enya Martin
Ask your Ma!

Comedy queen Enya Martin is back with a brand new stand up show, coming to Whale Theatre in Greystones on Friday 14th October, 7pm. An hilarious rollercoaster of her life experiences as she tells all about moving in, and nearly out! with her fella for the first time during lockdown. Enya discloses what drives her to drink, how she thinks this generation is doomed, and what she got up to when she couldn't travel outside her 5K. P.S. She is still not engaged, loves cushions, cats, and the festival of no sleep!! Go on, ask your Ma!! Approx Duration: 90 minutes plus interval. This event is SOLD OUT - register for waiting list at www.whaletheatre.ie or call the booking office on 01 2010550 to book.

Wicklow director's second feature film to open this month

Wicklow director Robert Manson's second feature film *Holy Island* will premiere in Dublin, Cork and Galway from October 14th.

The film was made in Co. Wicklow, making use of locations in Arklow, Brittas Bay, Wicklow Town and Bray. It was shot between two lockdowns in Autumn 2020.

Robert Manson, who wrote and directed *Holy Island*, lives and works in

Redcross and Leipzig, Germany.

The highly-anticipated *Holy Island* is an experimental drama, made for the Authored Works Scheme for the Arts Council, a scheme which provides film artists with the creative and editorial

freedom to make a feature-length authored cultural film work from a strong artistic point of view.

Holy Island is a story about two lost souls, Rosa and David, trapped in purgatory in the form of a run-down port town.

They meet awaiting a

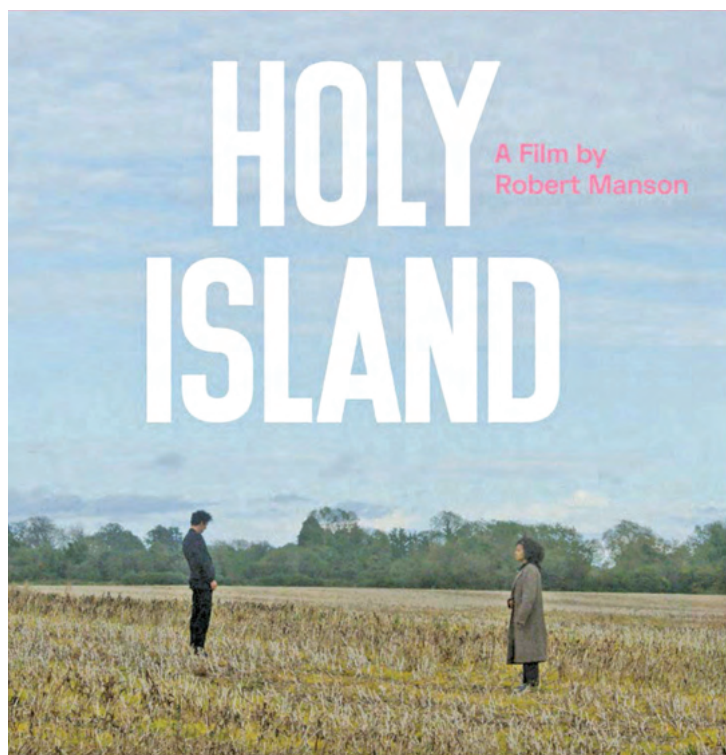
boat to leave the island, both longing to return home. Together they are forced to traverse an abnormal maze, piecing together their past lives through shared conversations and memories. In the end, only one of them can be saved. The other must fall.

The lead role of David is played by two actors, an idea borrowed from Bunuel's "That Obscure Object of Desire". The first half is played by Conor Madden, a darker and more melancholic performance. Then a switch occurs and a younger actor, Dermot Murphy, takes over the role for the middle and later sections of the film, this character is softer, more vulnerable and compassionate.

The cast also includes Jeanne Nicole Ní Áinle, Maria Oxley Boardman, Mark Doherty, and Levi O'Sullivan.

Photo exhibition

A photo exhibition by Andrew Manson will compliment the screening in The Mezz area in the Lighthouse cinema from the 15th to the 27th of October.



To get to the Mezz area you will need a cinema ticket and it is implied that all who attend the exhibition should go to the screening. Andrew Manson was

the Art Director on *Holy Island* and captured some stunning stills on set with his analogue camera. These were developed and scanned by Andrew in his studio in Wicklow.

The beautiful prints being exhibited were created by The Copper House, Dublin.

There will be a wine reception with Director Robert Manson & Art

Director Andrew Manson on Saturday 15th October at 6pm The Light House Cinema, Dublin - screening at 7pm. Tickets via The Lighthouse Cinema lighthousecinema.ie



Photo by Andrew Manson

Wicklow Arts Salon is back

Mermaid Arts Centre, Tuesday 18th October, 7:30pm. FREE

Previously hosted by Outpost Studios, the salon is being relaunched with the support of Wicklow County Arts Office, and will take place in person four times a year.

This year's programme will be curated and facilitated by artists Philip St John, Joanna Kidney and Olivia Fitzsimons. The first evening starts in the theatre in Mermaid Arts Centre on Tuesday 18th October at 7.30pm.

An opportunity for artists to meet their peers for an evening of discussion, the Salon will invite guest artists to explore important themes affecting cultural practitioners in Wicklow and beyond. Over the next 12 months, the focus will be on ideas of Sustaining a Career: what do artists need, creatively, financially, emotionally and more?

For the first Salon, the theme will be Collaborations,

and the guests are experts at that.

Internationally acclaimed theatre-makers Feidlim Cannon and Gary Keegan AKA Brokentalkers - <https://brokentalkers.ie/> - have collaborated with practitioners across many art-forms including music, dance, visual art and film. Writer Philip St John will chair a talk with Feidlim and Gary exploring such questions as, why collaborate, how artists choose potential collaborators, how can artists prepare themselves for the experience, and what are the benefits and drawbacks of collaboration?

As always, there will be time for all to contribute questions and opinions, along with an opportunity to mingle with fellow artists afterwards. Tea and coffee will be provided - feel free to bring something for the table to accompany it!

Age suitability: 18+. Duration: 2hrs



Brokentalkers Present The Boy Who Never Was

Mermaid Arts Centre, Friday 7th October, 8pm, & Saturday 8th October 2pm. €18 / €16. Age Suitability: 16+. Duration: 80 minutes

Adapted from the award-winning Icelandic novel *Moonstone*, by Sjúnn, Brokentalkers bring their contemporary theatrical approach to this beautifully evocative period work.

Set in 1918 *Moonstone* tells the story of a young queer man, Mani Steinn - film fanatic and dreamer - who exists on the fringes of an intolerant society at a moment of profound global transformation.

Set against the backdrop of a global pandemic, war in Europe and growing intolerance of 'others', *Moonstone* draws a line between past and present, exploring the cyclical nature of human history and the role of art as both a comfort and a compass.

Funded by The Arts Council of Ireland and Dublin City Council, Co-Produced by Project Arts Centre, Mermaid Arts Centre & Quaternaire.

Adapted for the stage and Directed by Feidlim Cannon & Gary Keegan. Creative Produced by Rachel Bergin.

Cast: Matthew Malone, Maeve O'Mahony, Molly O'Mahony, Konstantin Stanchev



Lots to 'si' in Wicklow for Italian travel agents

Representatives of a major Italian tour operator, Francorosso, together with 20 of its top-producing travel agents from Milan and Rome, have been exploring Co Wicklow and Ireland. The group are here as guests of Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland.

The aim of the travel agents' visit is to familiarise them with Ireland and our superb tourism offering, so that when they return home, they will be better informed and more enthusiastic than ever about Ireland, when advising their clients about planning and booking their holidays here.

The group's action-packed itinerary included the Powerscourt Estate and Gardens. They also had lunch in the Avoca Terrace Cafe. Marcella Ercolini, Tourism Ireland's Manager Italy, said: "We are delighted to invite this group of Italian travel agents to explore

Wicklow and elsewhere around Ireland. There really is no substitute for being able to come here and experience what Ireland has to offer at first-hand. Our aim is that when they return home, the travel agents will be even more enthusiastic about the destination, helping to secure a

greater share of their business for Ireland in 2023 and beyond.

"Italy is an important market for tourism to Ireland and fact-finding visits like this are a key element of the work that Tourism Ireland undertakes with the important travel trade in Italy."



The Italian travel agents in Powerscourt

Data released on use of defective tyres

Ahead of Road Safety Week in Ireland (October 3-9), an analysis of tyres replaced at a dozen tyre retailers nationwide has shown that a high number of vehicles on our roads are driving on seriously dangerous or defective tyres. The survey was carried out by German premium tyre manufacturer, Continental Tyres, at 12 tyre retailers across Ireland during the month of August.

By Martin McCarthy

In nearly all of the outlets, staff saw literally hundreds of tyres during the month that were below the legal tread depth limit of 1.6mm, tyres that were effectively bald and dangerous to drive on.

Once a tyre has worn down to a level at or below the legal level of 1.6mm of tread, the tyre ceases to be safe and a vehicle with such tyres can become unroadworthy with seriously reduced stopping ability.

According to Tom Dennigan of Continental Tyres Ireland: "Our survey of busy tyre retail outlets from across Ireland shows truly woeful levels of disregard for tyre safety regulations among a very significant proportion of Irish motorists. In more than half of the tyre outlets surveyed, 50 percent or more of the tyres they replaced were below the legal 1.6mm of tread depth. Just think, thousands of vehicles that were driving on the roads of Ireland just minutes beforehand were running on badly worn and seriously defective tyres. I would describe tyres like these as ticking time-bombs - nobody knows if they will or if they will not fail, but these tyres could have a failure and lead to a serious incident. For sure, it would not only be a disaster for the driver and occupants of the vehicle in question, but also for any other unsuspecting road user who just happened to be on the same road at the same time."

A sample of the survey results shows the widespread nature of the problem:

- At Sean McManus Tyres in Drogheda, Co. Louth, a staggering 90 percent of the tyres that staff replaced.
- Loughrea Tyres in Co. Galway reported that 80 percent of the tyres they replaced were at or below the legal tread depth level.
- Newbrook Tyres in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, found that 70 percent of tyres taken off customer vehicles were below the 1.6mm limit.
- For JW Tyres in Graiguecullen,

Carlow, some 40 percent of tyres replaced were excessively worn so as to be illegal and thus, highly dangerous.

• As evidence of a seemingly better level of tyre care in urban areas, BestDrive in Swords, Co Dublin, reported a figure of 18 percent of replaced tyres at or below the legal tread depth limit.

Tom Dennigan commented: "In addition to highlighting how the very high incidence of motorists driving on defective and illegal tyres is a countrywide problem, our survey also showed a high number of examples of uneven wear on replaced tyres. This can be caused by too much or too little air in the tyre but is most often caused when the wheels on a vehicle are out of alignment. In extreme cases, uneven wear can make a car unstable on the road and can seriously reduce the life of a vehicle's tyres. Every good tyre dealer will provide a free tyre check and as part of this, they will check for uneven wear on tyres. This is important because sometimes uneven wear can be on the inside of a tyre where it is not easily seen unless the vehicle is checked using a ramp or hoist. If motorists don't want to look after their tyres themselves, a very good solution is to regularly stop by your local tyre dealer who will provide a free tyre check and will be sure to check for issues like uneven wear."



20 year old tyre



Anne and Phil Thompson at the Greystones People of the Year Awards last Thursday in Greystones Golf Club

PLANNING

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I Rupert Barry seek planning permission for Restyling and Change of Use of Garage and Plantroom (as previously approved Reg. Ref. 20/232) to facilitate gym at ground floor and office/study in existing first floor space with two number velux Cabrio roof windows on north side and associated site works at Hollybrook, Convent Road, Delgany, Co. Wicklow A63 VX73. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

I, Olesia Demian wish to apply for planning and retention permission at 44 Heatherwood, Bray, Co. Wicklow A98K578. The proposed works will consist of the relocation of the entrance door to the front elevation, alterations to the ground floor window on the front and side elevation and blocking of the existing entrance on the side elevation. The area to be retained consists of the rear wall to the first floor extension along with the apex roof. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Claire Crowley seeks Full Planning Permission for the construction of a single-storey, 3-bedroom dwelling including separate garage, well, effluent treatment and disposal system, and all associated site works at Carrigower Lodge, Kilpedder, Co. Wicklow. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy at the offices of Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow during its public opening hours and a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made to the authority in writing on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.



Tyre cut

RECRUITMENT

Scoll Naomh Caoimhin
Cloccha Liathia

St Kevin's National School Greystones

are looking to hire

CLEANING STAFF

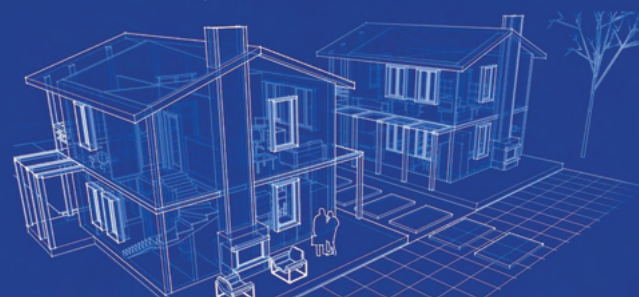
Position will be Monday to Friday, 5 days a week, afternoons only, from 2pm daily

Interested parties please call:

087 2589 422

ATTENTION Architects, Planners & Builders

Reach the widest readership for your planning notices in County Wicklow with Wicklow Times
Call **01 286 9111** or email **pauline@localtimes.ie**



'Emergency action needed to address apprenticeship backlog'

Sinn Féin TD John Brady has expressed his concern and frustration at the failure of the Government to adequately address the backlog in apprentices who have been left waiting for access to off-the-job training, which is required to allow them to finish their apprenticeships and qualify for a full wage.

"Apprentices are struggling with the rising cost of living. Between the cost of tools, travel, college fees and rent many apprentices are barely able to get by," said Deputy Brady.

"They are being failed by the government due to the backlog in accessing off-the-job training. Many apprenticeships are taking 5 or 6 years to complete instead of the 4 years.

"Reports indicate that more than seven out of ten young people in Ireland are intending to emigrate. They do not feel that there is a future for them here in this country. That three quarters of our young people want to leave the country is a startling revelation at a time when there is a national skills shortage. A skills shortage that the government is absolutely failing to address.

"My office has been contacted by apprentices who are anxious and worried about the fact that they are being left hanging by the failure of Minister Harris to ensure that there are places available for them to access the necessary off-the-job training required to allow them to qualify and receive the accreditation that will allow them to receive a full wage.

"They are being forced to wait up to 5 -6 years to finish their apprenticeship, which means that in the middle of a housing crisis, with eye-watering rents, a cost of living crisis, they must cope on limited wages way beyond the standard duration of an apprenticeship.

"I was recently contacted by the family of an apprentice in their early twenties who was told by Solas that there would be a twenty-month to two year waiting list before they could access the next phase of their off-the-job training.

"If students in third level education were to have their education interrupted by two years as a result of

Covid, the media and the national airwaves would be lit up by outrage. And rightly so.

"This is simply unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue. Cognisance must be given to the impact that this is having on the health of those who are being unduly punished by government mismanagement.

"Not only are young people being denied access to the training that they need to qualify in their chosen professions; we also have a national skills shortage, and a housing crisis, for which we currently lack the skilled personnel to fully address.

"The majority of the last generation of skilled trades workers to qualify in this country ended up in Australia and Canada. Anybody across Wicklow who is looking to get any work done around their home will be painfully aware of how difficult it is to find available skilled workers.

"There is a huge demand for apprenticeships. But there is a glaring lack of capacity within the system to deal with the severe backlogs created by Covid. Thousands of apprentices are still waiting for start dates to begin their classroom-based training.

"Currently, too few people get apprenticeships and those who do manage to get taken on often find they are trapped on apprentices' wages for months or years longer than necessary because the state has not provided adequate off-the-job training capacity.

"Mounting evidence shows the positive impact access to apprenticeships have on school-to-work transition, youth unemployment and economic growth. Apprenticeships have offered many people an alternative path to a qualification and good job prospects. Last year only 1798 apprentices qualified. Which is the lowest number since 2017. We need to see emergency action to address this backlog."



Marlena and Gavin Murphy at the Greystones People of the Year Awards last Thursday in Greystones Golf Club

Irish SMEs looking to digitalisation to future proof business

Irish SMEs are investing in digitalisation to help future proof their businesses and operate more cost effectively at a time when they are concerned about the economy and rising costs of doing business according to a new survey commissioned by Google Ireland and conducted by Amarach.

The survey found almost three quarters (72%) of SMEs surveyed said that surviving the current period of economic uncertainty is a key priority over the next 12 months, while 71% are prioritising revenue and profit growth. In addition, the rising costs of doing business is a key concern for 63% of SMEs in the year ahead.

Despite this economic uncertainty and concern around rising costs, businesses recognised the impact that investing in digitalisation can have on managing costs

and supporting growth. Almost half (48%) of SMEs stated that digital skills and tools allow them to operate more cost effectively while 60% use them to connect with customers and 46% say it opens up new markets for their business. Further demonstrating the value of digital, 61% of those surveyed stated that digital skills are essential to future proofing their business.

You're the Business is a digital platform offering Irish SMEs access to free live and on-demand

training sessions, geared toward supporting companies at all stages of their digitalisation journey. In addition, ten participants that demonstrate a commitment to digital will be awarded with a suite of customised supports, including mentorship and ad funding.

The survey also found that 66% of Irish SMEs believe that Ireland is a good place to own and operate a small business with 51% of those citing access to government supports like training and funding as a reason for that.

For further information on the various training modules as well as the opportunity to be awarded a customised support package, please visit: g.co/yourethebusiness

ISIF-backed Hotel Investment Fund financing now available for Wicklow-based hotels

Pembroke Hospitality and The Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) have announced that Wicklow-based hotels can now apply to the Hotel Investment Fund (HIF) for finance to enhance or expand their facilities or for working capital or cash flow support as they emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic disruption.

Recently, Pembroke Hospitality and ISIF announced a €50m commitment to investing in hotels across the country where trading has been negatively impacted by the pandemic or to ramp up for full recovery in the Wicklow hospitality market.

The HIF provides Wicklow hotel owners with interim funding over the medium term to allow their business to recover and grow post-Covid-19. The HIF will target investments in local hotels in Wicklow that are graded 3-star and above, with a minimum of 25 bedrooms.

The Fund will invest in hotels that have a viable growth plan but are unable to easily raise finance from banks or alternative lenders. The HIF will provide finance facilities to hotels of between €0.5m to €5.0m, for a three-year timeframe. The capital deployed from the fund can support Wicklow hoteliers wishing to undertake capital expenditure projects or green investments and will assist with their return to a positive and sustainable growth trajectory. The HIF will provide investment in the form of 3-year preference equity (subordinated to senior/bank debt) with a coupon that is rolled-up until redemption at the end of the term.

Pembroke Hospitality will manage and execute the fund in partnership with BVP Investments.

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